

Statement on Congressional Passage of Legislation To Provide Tax Credits To Aid Businesses Hiring Veterans

November 16, 2011

I want to congratulate Republicans and Democrats in Congress for coming together to pass these tax credits that will encourage businesses to hire America's veterans. No veteran who fought for our country should have to fight for a job when they come home. That's why I proposed these tax credits back in August, and

I look forward to signing them into law. This is a good first step, but it is only a step. Congress needs to pass the rest of my "American Jobs Act" so that we can create jobs and put money in the pockets of the middle class.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 674.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Julia E. Gillard of Australia in Canberra, Australia

November 16, 2011

Prime Minister Gillard. Good evening, one and all. I take this opportunity to very warmly welcome President Obama to Australia for his first visit as President. President Obama is no stranger to our shores, having visited Australia before, but it is a special delight to have him here for his first visit as President. And it comes at an important time in our nation's history and in the history of our region.

We will be looking back during this visit. We'll be looking back at 60 years of the AN-ZUS alliance. We'll be looking back 10 years to the dreadful day of 9/11, a day we all remember with great sorrow. And we will be reflecting on those events. But we will be looking forward.

We live in the growing region of the world whose global—contribution to global growth is a profound one. We live in a region which is changing, changing in important ways. And as a result of those changes, President Obama and I have been discussing the best way of our militaries cooperating for the future.

So I'm very pleased to be able to announce with President Obama that we've agreed joint initiatives to enhance our alliance, 60 years old and being kept robust for tomorrow. It is a new agreement to expand the existing collaboration between the Australian Defence Force and the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Air Force. What this means in very practical detail is from mid-2012, Australia will welcome deployments

of a company-sized rotation of 200 to 250 marines in the Northern Territory for around 6 months at a time.

Over a number of years, we intend to build on this relationship in a staged way to a full force of around 2,500 personnel. That is a full Marine Air Ground Task Force.

A second component of these initiatives, which we have agreed, is greater access by U.S. military aircraft to the Royal Australian Air Force facilities in our country's north. This will involve more frequent movements of U.S. military aircraft into and out of northern Australia. Now, taken together, these two initiatives make our alliance stronger, they strengthen our cooperation in our region.

We are a region that is growing economically. But stability is important for economic growth too. And our alliance has been a bedrock of stability in our region. So building on our alliance through this new initiative is about stability. It will be good for our Australian Defence Force to increase their capabilities by joint training, combined training, with the U.S. Marines and personnel. It will mean that we are postured to better respond together, along with other partners in the Asia-Pacific, to any regional contingency, including the provision of humanitarian assistance and dealing with natural disasters.

In addition to discussing this global force posture review by the United States and these

new initiatives in our alliance, the President of the United States and I have had an opportunity to reflect on a number of other issues: to reflect on circumstances in the global economy, to reflect on a clean energy future for our nations and for our planet, to reflect on the forthcoming East Asia Summit. President Obama will proceed from Australia to that summit in Indonesia, where he spent time growing up.

We've had a comprehensive discussion. I very much welcome President Obama to Australia. I think he's already seen that the welcome he's getting from Australians, including Australian schoolchildren, is a very warm one. And I know that that is going to be sustained during tonight's events and the events of tomorrow.

President Obama, over to you.

President Obama. Well, good day, everybody. And thank you, Madam Prime Minister, for your generous welcome, your friendship and your partnership. I am thrilled to be down under.

As you may know, this is not my first visit to Australia. In fact, I first visited Australia as a boy. And I've never forgotten the warmth and kindness that the Australian people extended to me when I was 6 and 8. And I can see that the Australian people have lost none of that warmth.

I very much wanted to take this trip last year, and although events back home prevented me from doing so, I was determined to come for a simple reason: The United States of America has no stronger ally than Australia. We are bound by common values, the rights and the freedoms that we cherish. And for nearly a century, we've stood together in defense of these freedoms. And I'm very happy to be here as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of our alliance and as we work together to strengthen it for the future.

We are two Pacific nations, and with my visit to the region I am making it clear that the United States is stepping up its commitment to the entire Asia-Pacific. In this work, we're deeply grateful for our alliance with Australia and the leadership role that it plays. As it has been for six decades, our alliance is going to be

indispensable to our shared future, the security we need and the prosperity that we seek not only in this region, but around the world.

I'm also very grateful for my partnership with Prime Minister Gillard. We've worked quite a bit together lately—

Prime Minister Gillard. You bet.

President Obama. —spanning time zones: the G-20 in Cannes, APEC and TPP in Hawaii; now here in Australia; and next onto Bali for the East Asia Summit. And this speaks to how closely our countries work together on a wide range of issues. And in my friend Julia, I see the quality that we Americans admire most in our Australian friends: somebody who's down to earth, easy to talk to, and who says it like it is, straight up. And that's why we achieved so much today.

We agreed to push ahead with our efforts to create jobs for our people by bringing our economies and those of the region even closer together. Building on our progress at APEC, we're going to keep striving for a seamless regional economy. And as the two largest economies in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Australia and the United States are helping to lead the way to a new model for trade across the region. And along with our G-20 partners, we agreed that we have to stay focused on the growth that creates jobs and that every nation needs to play by the same economic rules of the road.

As two global partners, we discussed the whole range of challenges where we stand shoulder to shoulder, including Afghanistan. Obviously, this has not been an easy mission for either of our countries, and our hearts go out to the families that were affected on October 29. But we both understand what's at stake, what happens when Al Qaida has safe havens. We've seen the awful loss of life, from 9/11 to Bali.

So I thanked the Prime Minister for Australia's strong commitment to this mission. I salute the extraordinary sacrifices of our forces who serve together, including your Australian troops who've shown that no job is too tough for your Diggers. Today the Prime Minister and I reaffirmed the way forward. The transition has begun. Afghans

are stepping into the lead. As they do, our troops, American and Australian, will draw down responsibly together so that we preserve the progress that we've made, and by 2014, Afghans will take full responsibility for security in their country.

But our focus today, as the Prime Minister said, was on preparing our alliance for the future. And so I am very pleased that we are able to make these announcements here together on Australian soil. Because of these initiatives that are the result of our countries working very closely together as partners, we're going to be in a position to more effectively strengthen the security of both of our nations and this region.

As Julia described, we are increasing our cooperation, and I'd add, America's commitment to this region. Our U.S. Marines will begin rotating through Darwin for joint training and exercises. Our Air Force will rotate additional aircraft through more airfields in northern Australia. And these rotations, which are going to be taking place on Australian bases, will bring our militaries even closer and make them even more effective. We'll enhance our ability to train, exercise, and operate with allies and partners across the region, and that in turn will allow us to work with these nations to respond even faster to a wide range of challenges, including humanitarian crises and disaster relief, as well as promoting security cooperation across the region.

And this commitment builds upon the best traditions of our alliance. For decades, Australians have welcomed our servicemembers as they've come here to work, train, and exercise together. And I'm looking forward to joining the Prime Minister in Darwin tomorrow to thank our troops, Australians and Americans, for the incredible work that they are doing.

Finally, as I'll discuss more in my speech to Parliament tomorrow, this deepening of our alliance sends a clear message of our commitment to this region, a commitment that is enduring and unwavering. It's a commitment that I'll reaffirm in Bali as the United States joins the East Asia Summit. And I want to thank our Australian friends who supported our membership so strongly and have worked to make

sure that the EAS addresses regional challenges that affect all of us like proliferation and maritime security.

So again, I'm very pleased that we're able to make these important announcements during my visit. Madam Prime Minister, I thank you for being such a strong partner and a champion of our alliance.

And once again, I want to thank the Australian people for the kindness they showed me about 40 years ago and the kindness that they're showing me during my visit today. It's that friendship and that solidarity that makes and keeps our alliance one of the strongest in the world.

Prime Minister Gillard. Thank you.

We'll turn to taking some questions. I think we'll probably take one from the Australian media first. It's Phil Hudson.

U.S. Troop Deployment in Australia/China/U.S. Military Operations in Afghanistan

Q. Phillip Hudson from the Melbourne Herald Sun. Mr. President, welcome back to Australia.

President Obama. Thank you very much.

Q. You and Prime Minister Gillard have outlined what is for us a significant new U.S. troop buildup. How much of this is because you're worried about the rise of China? And as of today's deal, U.S. Marines will be for the first time conducting exercises by themselves on Australian soil. Why is that, and what will they be doing?

And, Mr. President, you also mentioned in your remarks that Afghanistan is not an easy mission. In the past few months, there have been three cases for Australia where our troops have been shot at by the Afghan soldiers who have been training, and sadly, four of our soldiers have died, and many others have been injured. Australian public opinion is strongly against our involvement continuing. You outlined the—just then, the drawdown. What can you say to the Australian people who don't want to wait, who want to leave immediately?

President Obama. Well, first, with respect to these new initiatives, this rotational deployment is significant because what it allows us to

do is to not only build capacity and cooperation between our two countries, but it also allows us to meet the demands of a lot of partners in the region that want to feel that they're getting the training, they're getting the exercises, and that we have the presence that's necessary to maintain the security architecture in the region.

And so, as Julia mentioned, this is a region that's becoming increasingly important. The economy in this area is going to be the engine for world economic growth for some time to come. The lines of commerce and trade are constantly expanding. And it's appropriate then for us to make sure that not only our alliance, but the security architecture of the region is updated for the 21st century, and this initiative is going to allow us to do that.

It also allows us to respond to a whole host of challenges, like humanitarian or disaster relief, that frankly, given how large the Asia-Pacific region is, it can sometimes be difficult to do, and this will allow us to be able to respond in a more timely fashion and also equip a lot of countries, smaller countries who may not have the same capacity, it allows us to equip them so that they can respond more quickly as well.

And I guess the last part of your question, with respect to China, I've said repeatedly and I will say again today that we welcome a rising, peaceful China. What they've been able to achieve in terms of lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty over the last two decades has been nothing short of remarkable. And that is good not just for China, but it's potentially good for the region. And I know Australia's economy obviously has benefited by the increased demand that you're seeing in China.

The main message that I've said not only publicly, but also privately to the Chinese is that with their rise comes increased responsibilities. It's important for them to play by the rules of the road and in fact help underwrite the rules that have allowed so much remarkable economic progress to be made over the last several decades. And that's going to be true on a whole host of issues.

So where China is playing by those rules, recognizing its new role, I think this is a win-win situation. There are going to be times

where they're not, and we will send a clear message to them that we think that they need to be on track in terms of accepting the rules and responsibilities that come with being a world power.

With respect to Afghanistan, the impact of any loss of life among our troops is heartbreaking. And obviously, as President of the United States, there's no greater responsibility and nothing more difficult than putting our troops in harm's way. I think Prime Minister Gillard feels the same way that I do, which is we would not be sending our young men and women into harm's way unless we thought it was absolutely necessary for the security of our country.

What we have established is a transition process that allows Afghans to build up their capacity and take on a greater security role over the next 2 years. But it's important that we do it right. As some of you are aware, I just announced that all remaining troops in Iraq will be removed. It would have been tempting, given that I have been opposed to the Iraq war from the start, when I came into office, to say, we're going to get you all out right away. But what I recognized was that if we weren't thoughtful about how we proceed, then the enormous sacrifices that had been made by our men and women in the previous years might be for naught.

And what I'd say to the Australian people at this point is, given the enormous investment that's been made and the signs that we can, in fact, leave behind a country that's not perfect, but one that is more stable, more secure, and does not provide safe haven for terrorists, it's appropriate for us to finish the job and do it right.

Prime Minister Gillard. If I could just add to that and say, every time I have met President Obama and we've talked about our alliance, we've talked about our work in Afghanistan, and in our meetings, both formal and informal, the President has shown the greatest possible concern for our troops in the field. Now, the meetings we've had over the last few weeks at various international events have coincided with some of the most bitter and difficult news that we've had from Afghanistan, and every

step of the way the President has gone out of his way to convey to me his condolences for the Australian people and particularly for the families that have suffered such a grievous loss.

President Obama. Laura MacInnis, Reuters.

Global Economic Stabilization Efforts/U.S. Economy

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Chancellor Merkel said this week that Europe is in its toughest hour since World War II. Markets are now showing some anxiety about the possibility of instability spreading to France as well. Are you worried that the steps European leaders are taking are too incremental so far? Do you think something bolder or a more difficult set of decisions need to be taken to fully ring-fence that crisis?

I have a question for Prime Minister Gillard as well. Are you concerned that the fiscal pressures the United States is under at the moment may compromise its ability to sustain its plans for the region, including the initiatives announced today? Do you have to take those with something of a grain of salt until the supercommittee process is concluded?

President Obama. With respect to Europe, I'm deeply concerned, have been deeply concerned, I suspect we'll be deeply concerned tomorrow and next week and the week after that. Until we put in place a concrete plan and structure that sends a clear signal to the markets that Europe is standing behind the euro and will do what it takes, we're going to continue to see the kinds of turmoil that we saw in the markets today—or was it yesterday? I'm trying to figure out what—[laughter]—what time zone I'm in here.

Prime Minister Gillard. It's all of the time.

President Obama. All of the—right. [Laughter] We have consulted very closely with our European friends. I think that there is a genuine desire on the part of leaders like President Sarkozy and Chancellor Merkel to solve this crisis. But they've got a complicated political structure.

The problem right now is a problem of political will; it's not a technical problem. We saw some progress with Italy and Greece both put-

ting forward essentially unity governments that can implement some significant reforms that need to take place in those countries. But at this point, the larger European community has to stand behind the European project. And for those American readers or listeners, and those Australian readers or listeners, I think we all understand at this point, we've got an integrated world economy and what happens in Europe will have an impact on us.

So we are going to continue to advise European leaders on what options we think would meet the threshold where markets would settle down. It is going to require some tough decisions on their part. They have made some progress on some fronts, like their efforts to recapitalize the banks. But ultimately, what they're going to need is a firewall that sends a clear signal: "We stand behind the European project, and we stand behind the euro." And those members of the euro zone, they are going to have the liquidity they need to service their debt. So there's more work to do on that front.

And just—I don't want to steal your question, but I do want to just say, with respect to our budget, there's a reason why I'm spending this time out here in Asia and out here in the Pacific region. First and foremost, because this is the fastest growing economic region in the world, and I want to create jobs in the United States, which means we've got to sell products here and invest here and have a robust trading relationship here, and Australia happens to be one of our strongest trading partners.

But the second message I'm trying to send is that we are here to stay. This is a region of huge strategic importance to us. And I've been—I've made very clear, and I'll amplify in my speech to Parliament tomorrow, that even as we make a whole host of important fiscal decisions back home, this is right up there at the top of my priority list. And we're going to make sure that we are able to fulfill our leadership role in the Asia-Pacific region.

Prime Minister Gillard. And I was just going to make what I think is the commonsense point. I'm not going to issue words of advice about the fiscal position in the United States,

but the commonsense point from the point of view of the leader is, ultimately, budgets are about choices and there are hard choices about the things you value. And I think, by President Obama being here, he is saying he values the role of the United States in this region and our alliance, and that's what the announcement we've made today is all about.

We've got a question from Mark Riley from the Australian media.

India/Australia-India Relations/Environment

Q. Thanks, Ma'am. This is Mark Riley from 7News, Australia. Mr. President, I wanted to ask you about the other rising giant of our region, India. And the Prime Minister might like to add some comments. How significant is it for the U.S. that Australia is now considering selling uranium to India? And could you clear up for us what influence or encouragement your administration gave Australia as it made that decision?

And also, the decision is so India can produce clean energy. In that regard, you're aware that our Parliament has passed a new bill pricing carbon, a carbon tax, if you like. But we're intrigued about where America is going on this issue. And countries like Australia don't see a carbon trading system in the world working unless America is a big part of it. Can you tell us, is it your wish that American will have an emissions trading scheme across the Nation within the next 5 years or so? How heavily do you want to see America involved in an emissions trading scheme globally? Or has this become too politically hard for you?

President Obama. Good. Well, first of all, with respect to India, we have not had any influence, I suspect, on Australia's decision to explore what its relationship in terms of the peaceful use of nuclear energy in India might be. I suspect that you've got some pretty smart Government officials here who figured out that India is a big player and that the Australia-India relationship is one that should be cultivated. So they—I don't think Julia or anybody else needs my advice in figuring that out. This is part of your neighborhood, and you are going

to make bilateral decisions about how to move forward.

I think, without wading into the details, the discussions that are currently taking place here in Australia around that relationship and the nuclear issue with India are ones that are compatible with international law, compatible with decisions that were made in the NPT. And I will watch with interest what's determined. But this is not something between the United States and Australia, this is something between India and Australia.

With respect to carbon emissions, I think I share the view of your Prime Minister and most scientists in the world that climate change is a real problem and that human activity is contributing to it and that we all have a responsibility to find ways to reduce our carbon emissions.

Each country is trying to figure out how to do that most effectively. Here in Australia, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, you've moved forward with a bold strategy. In the United States, although we haven't passed a what we call a cap-and-trade system, an exchange, what we have done is, for example, taken steps to double fuel efficiency standard on cars, which will have an enormous impact on removing carbon from the atmosphere.

We've invested heavily in clean energy research. We believe very strongly that with improved efficiencies and a whole step—a whole range of steps that we can meet and the commitments that we made in Copenhagen and Cancun. And as we move forward over the next several years, my hope is, is that the United States, as one of several countries with a big carbon footprint, can find further ways to reduce our carbon emissions. I think that's good for the world. I actually think, over the long term, it's good for our economies as well, because it's my strong belief that industries, utilities, individual consumers, we're all going to have to adapt how we use energy and how we think about carbon.

Now, another belief that I think the Prime Minister and I share is that the advanced economies can't do this alone. So part of our insistence when we are in multilateral fora—and I

will continue to insist on this when we go to Durban—is that if we are taking a series of steps, then it's important that emerging economies like China and India are also part of the bargain. It doesn't mean that they have to do exactly what we do. We understand that in terms of per capita carbon emissions, they've got a long way to go before they catch up to us. But it does mean that they've got to take seriously their responsibilities as well.

And so ultimately, what we want is a mechanism whereby all countries are making an effort. And it's going to be a tough slog, particularly at a time when the economies are—a lot of economies are still struggling. But I think it's actually one that over the long term can be beneficial.

Jackie Calmes [New York Times].

China/Trade

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Prime Minister Gillard. I wanted to double back to the topic of China. It seems there's a bit of a schizophrenic aspect to this week of summity in the Asian-Pacific, where China is participating from Hawaii to Indonesia, but then you have all the rest of you who are talking about, on the one hand, a trade bloc that excludes China, and now this—and an increased military presence for the United States, which is symbolized most by this agreement the two of you have made for a permanent U.S. presence in Australia.

What is it everyone fears so much from China? And isn't there some risk that you would increase tensions in a way that would take some of the—China might take some of the very actions you fear?

Prime Minister Gillard. I'm happy to start with that and then go to the President. I don't—I think there's actually a theme throughout the work we've been involved with at APEC, some of the discussion here and what we will take to the East Asia Summit. We may be on a journey from saying “aloha” to “good day” to “*bali hai*” or something like that. But I actually think in terms of strategic outlook, it remains the same, which is both of our nations are deeply engaged with China as it ris-

es and we want to see China rise into the global rules-based order.

That's our aspiration. I understand it to be the aspiration of the United States. It's something that we pursue bilaterally with China. It's something that we pursue multilaterally in the various forums that we work in.

This East Asia Summit will have a particular significance, coming for the first time with the President of the United States there and of course Russia represented around the table, so all of the players with the right mandate to discuss strategic, political, and economic questions for our region.

So I actually believe there's a continuity here: APEC fundamentally focused on trade and economic liberalization; here in Australia, longtime allies, talking about the future of their alliance and building for that future, as you would expect, but also preparing for a set of discussions in Bali, which will bring us together again with our friends across the region.

President Obama. Just to pick up on this theme, Jackie, I think the notion that we fear China is mistaken. The notion that we are looking to exclude China is mistaken. And I'll take TPP as a perfect example of this. We haven't excluded China from the TPP. What we have said is, the future of this region depends on robust trade and commerce and the only way we're going to grow that trade is if we have a high-standards trade agreement where everybody is playing by the same rules, where if one set of markets is open then there's reciprocity among the other trading partners, where there are certain rules that we abide by in terms of intellectual property rights protection or how we deal with government procurement, in addition to the traditional areas like tariffs.

And what we saw in Honolulu, in APEC, was that a number of countries that weren't part of the initial discussions—like Japan, Canada, Mexico—all expressed an interest in beginning the consultations to be part of this high-standard trade agreement that could potentially be a model for the entire region.

Now, if China says, we want to consult with you about being part of this as well, we welcome that. It will require China to rethink

some of its approaches to trade, just as every other country that's been involved in the consultations for the TPP have had to think through, all right, what kinds of adjustments are we willing to make?

And so that's the consistent theme here. This is a growing region. It is a vital region. The United States is going to be a huge participant in both economic and security issues in the Asia-Pacific region, and our overriding desire is that we have a clear set of principles that all of us can abide by so that all of us can succeed. And I think it's going to be important for China to be a part of that. I think that's good for us.

But it's going to require China, just like all the rest of us, to align our existing policies and what we've done in the past with what's needed for a brighter future. All right?

Prime Minister Gillard. Thank you very much.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

Prime Minister Gillard. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 6:10 p.m. at Parliament House. In his remarks, he referred to President Nicolas Sarkozy of France; and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany.

Remarks Following a Dinner With Members of Parliament in Canberra November 16, 2011

Well, Prime Minister Gillard and Leader Abbott, thank you both for your wonderfully warm words. And I thank you for showing that in Canberra, as in Washington, people may not always see eye to eye, but on this we are all united: There are no better friends than the United States and Australia.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, and distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am going to be brief, for we have had a busy day. I am not sure what day it is. *[Laughter]* And I'm going to subject you to a very long speech tomorrow.

But I do want to express my deep appreciation for the way you've welcomed me here today. I know that I am not the first guy from Chicago to come to these parts. A century ago, Walter Burley Griffin came here with a vision for this city. He said, "I have planned a city that is not like any other in the world." And tonight I want to thank all of you and the people of Australia for the hospitality that is unlike any other in the world.

Our toasts earlier tonight reminded me of a story. It's from our troops—this is true story—our troops serving together in Afghanistan. Our guys, the Americans, couldn't figure out why your guys were always talking about cheese, all day long, morning, noon, and night. Why are the Aussies always talking about

cheese? And then finally, they realized, it was their Australian friends just saying hello, just saying cheers. *[Laughter]*

So we Americans and Australians, we may not always speak the same way or use the same words, but I think it's pretty clear, especially from the spirit of this visit and our time together this evening, that we understand each other. And we see the world in the same way, even if we do have to disagree on the merits of vegemite. *[Laughter]*

As many of you know, I first came to Australia as a child. But despite my visits, I have to admit I never did learn to talk "Strine." I know there is some concern here that your Australian language is being Americanized. So perhaps it's time for us to reverse the trend. Tonight, with your permission, I'd like to give it a burl. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank the Prime Minister for a very productive meeting that we had today. I think she'll agree it was a real chinwag. *[Laughter]* When Julia and I meet, we listen to each other, we learn from each other. It's not just a lot of earbashing. *[Laughter]* That's a good one—earbashing. *[Laughter]* I can use that in Washington, because there's a lot of earbashing sometimes. *[Laughter]*

That's been the story of our two nations. Through a century of progress and struggle, we